

Press Release

Date: 18th January 2017

€9.7 MILLION RENEWABLE ENERGY CENTRE OPENS AT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

A €9.7 million cross-border research centre for renewable energy projects has been opened at Queen's University Belfast today (Wednesday 17 January).

Funded by the EU's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the SEUPB, the Bryden Centre for Advanced Marine and Bio-Energy Research will recruit 34 PhD students across the marine and bio-energy disciplines.

Match-funding for the project has been provided by the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation in Ireland. This research includes the use of tidal power at Strangford Lough and the North Antrim Coast, ocean energy sites in Western Scotland, as well as the potential for wave and tidal power generation in Donegal.

The abundance of natural energy resources, value in organic waste and the opportunities for the circular economy in the inter-regional area have also driven the focus of the bio-energy research. The potential for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland to become leaders in marine renewable energy is vast.

Acting Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University Belfast, Professor James McElnay, commented: **“The role of Queen's University in leading the Bryden Centre for Advanced Marine and Bio-Energy Research is substantial to the University and to the entire renewable energy sector in Northern Ireland and Ireland, producing vital cross-border research.**

“Queen's is already renowned for our research in this area through the Centre of Advanced Sustainable Energy. This partnership will continue to build and expand our expertise and help to develop the next generation of leaders in renewable energy research and education.”



Through the Bryden Centre, Queen's University PhD student Nuala Carr is focusing on ensuring that marine renewable energy is accepted socially in communities right across Ireland.

She commented: “There are many challenges facing the marine renewable energy industry. Through the Bryden Centre I have been given the fantastic opportunity to work with both industry and government to enhance acceptability and boost renewable energy across Northern Ireland and Ireland.

“I will also have the chance to make a positive impact by assisting in the implementation of marine spatial planning - a process that brings together users of the ocean to make informed and coordinated decisions about how to use marine resources sustainably.”

Working with a number of cross-border partners including the University of Highlands and Islands, Letterkenny Institute of Technology, Ulster University, the Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute, Donegal County Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council, the project will create the largest amount of cross-border research in this specific area to date.

The Bryden Centre was named in tribute to the late Professor Ian Bryden, who was a leading expert in marine renewable energy, with a 30 year research career in fields associated with energy and hydrodynamics.

Welcoming the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the SEUPB said: **“The project receives support from the EU INTERREG VA because it will positively address the low level of high value sectors of research and innovation within this cross-border region, by creating invaluable industry-relevant research into bio-energy and marine-based renewable energy sources. Bringing together, for the first time, a number of partners on a cross-border basis across Northern Ireland, Ireland and Western Scotland, who have the capacity to deliver high quality research and so create a strong economic impact in the future in this region.**

“The project also aligns with the EU’s Energy 2020 agenda, specifically the renewable energy directive which requires that all 28 member states meet at least 20% of their total energy needs with renewables by 2020.”



Paul Hannigan, President Letterkenny Institute of Technology, commented: **“Building research capacity is one of our strategic objectives at Letterkenny Institute of Technology and projects such as The Bryden Centre for Advanced Marine and Bio-Energy funded by Interreg Va will only further enhance and add value to the North West region. We are delighted to be working with the lead partner Queen’s University of Belfast and the other partners in this cross border multidisciplinary industry driven renewable energy research project.”**

Professor Clive Mulholland, Principal and Vice-chancellor of the University of Highlands and Islands commented: **“There is huge potential for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland to lead the way in marine and bio-energy. We are proud to collaborate with our partners to develop cutting-edge research and we believe the centre is a fitting tribute to our much missed colleague, Professor Ian Bryden.”**

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Notes to Editor:

SEUPB

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.
- The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
- The INTERREG VA Programme has a value of €283 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu



Special EU Programmes Body
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